



State of Connecticut
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES
Central Office | 450 Columbus Blvd., Suite 2, Hartford, CT 06103
Promoting Equality and Justice for all People

LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE
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Testimony Regarding H.B. 5043, An Act Promoting a Fair, Civil, and Harassment-Free Workplace; S.B. 15, An Act Concerning Fair and Equal Pay for Equal Work; and H.B. 5386, An Act Concerning Various Pay Equity and Fairness Matters

Good morning/afternoon Senator Gomes, Senator Minor, Representative Porter, Representative Bocchino, Vice-Chairs, and distinguished members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Tanya Hughes, and I am the Executive Director of the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO). Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on three bills.

First, the CHRO **supports** H.B. 5043, An Act Promoting a Fair, Civil, and Harassment-Free Workplace. This bill extends existing requirements for employers to provide information and training regarding workplace harassment. Currently, employers are required to provide information on sexual harassment and to provide sexual harassment training to every new supervisor within six months of their assuming of a supervisory role. H.B. 5043 would require that information and training be provided regarding any form of harassment based on a status protected by our employment anti-discrimination statutes. The bill would also require that the training be provided to nonsupervisory employees within six months of hire, and that periodic updates be provided every five years. The scope of required training would also be expanded to encompass bystander intervention and workplace civility.

Recent movements such as #MeToo and #TimesUp have created spaces for people to call attention to the many forms of harassment, inequity, and incivility that can occur in workplaces of all stripes. That the spotlight on demeaning and discriminatory conduct is shining especially bright now, however, does not mean that this conduct has not been occurring for a long time, or that the conduct will cease without action to prevent it. By expanding the kinds of employees who must receive training and the frequency with which the training must be provided, H.B. 5043 represents a critical next step in the fight against workplace harassment.

The CHRO also **supports** the salary history prohibitions incorporated in S.B. 15, An Act Concerning Fair and Equal Pay for Equal Work, and H.B. 5386, An Act Concerning Various Pay Equity and Fairness Matters. It is well-known and well-documented that women face widespread pay disparities in workplaces nationwide.¹ It is for that reason that salary history should not be a permissible inquiry or basis for determining compensation.² The CHRO therefore firmly supports the provisions of these two bills that would prohibit prospective employers from inquiring about wage and salary history before an employment offer with wage information has been made and accepted. The CHRO would, however, like to work with the Committee to address certain issues regarding damages unique to the changes proposed on H.B. 5386.

¹ <https://nwlc.org/resources/asking-for-salary-history-perpetuates-pay-discrimination-from-job-to-job/>

² <https://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/compensation.html>